

# The Appleton BIENNIAL

June 19 – August 15, 2004

*For the first time*, the Appleton Museum of Art hosts a regional juried exhibition, the type of event often found in many other communities. While there are many reasons to undertake this venture, the primary opportunity this exhibit affords is to reach toward one of our institution's main goals: to strengthen our connections with our community. The Appleton Biennial helps us attain this goal in many ways. Specifically, we have the fortune to support local artists by affording equal opportunity for them to exhibit in the Museum. It offers us chances to meet and develop colleagues, contacts, and friendships, as well as supporters of the arts. Another goal that is served through this exhibit is to heighten awareness about the Appleton Museum, its collections, exhibitions, and programs. By bringing the best of contemporary regional art to the center of the geographical area (Alachua, Citrus, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, and Sumter counties) and acting as catalyst in providing a forum for creative inspiration, engaging discussions, and attention to current trends in art, this exhibit may possibly even result in inspiring people to become interested in art or to become artists. What a wonderful occasion this is to discover the wealth of talent in our own backyard!

While this is the first juried adventure for the Appleton, we are extremely pleased with the great response of 114 applications. As you know, a juried or judged show means that some artists are selected and others are not. It is never an easy task to decide; all artists have merit. As judge and curator for this exhibit, many criteria formed the basis of the decision process from the time of the call for artists. As in suggesting any exhibit for the Appleton, we ask a number of questions. Are the images intriguing? Do they cause you to pause, take notice, or look twice – often leaving you wondering and wanting to know more? Will it engage our audience and bring something to them that they may not see elsewhere?

The applications were reviewed and selections made from slide and digital submissions as well as studio visits. While the museum is blessed with liberal exhibition space, it is limited. The final selection included 17 artists, more than we originally anticipated. Each artist is showcased through a number of his or her works, enabling the viewer to explore an artist in depth as well as examine artists among one another to discover current regional trends in art.

The nature of this call for artists would dictate that there would not be a common theme or consistency in media. We hoped for as much diversity in all aspects as possible. Variety appears in media, technique, subject, style, representation (realism/abstraction), location, gender, age, nationality, and sensibility. And yet, common themes appear. These overriding themes included: 1. Nature – the inspiration, creation, interpretation, and/or the manipulation of such. 2. Process – the works emerge from a process of exploring materials or techniques. 3. The human condition – relationships, memories/nostalgia or the distortion of such, and social commentaries. While these themes transcend the works represented in these galleries, ultimately the creations are the voice of the individual artist, and for them, they are liberating.

Dr. Leslie Hammond  
Director of Curatorial Affairs

Anthony Ackrill

Ron Affee

Daniela Banatova

John Brett

Cristobal Castro

Michael Everett

Ed Franklin

Angela Gould

Brooke Green

Scott Hazard

Gene Hotaling

Lisa Iglesias

Bill Roberts

William Schaaf

Shirley Sjolund

Jack Thursby

James Vredevoogd

# Nature

The theme of nature appears in some aspect or another in almost every artist's work. Nevertheless, its strength is more prevalent in some than others. Artists such as Ron Affee and Michael Everett work directly in nature, while Scott Hazard questions our perceptions of it. Daniela Banatova is inspired by nature, and her forms are so organic, you would think she was creating at cell level. Others are simply in tune with nature through their process and materials, such as Bill Roberts, William Schaaf, and Gene Hotaling.

## Ron Affee

Spontaneity is necessity. Working in plein-air (painting on site) with oil, no less, necessitates an impressionistic style – working quickly, to keep the image from changing too much. Think of how quickly a cloud goes by, how rapidly the image changes each second – forming into this, into that. This is what Affee captures. The fleeting moment of the Florida landscape he has learned to paint quickly, capturing its essence. While some images are created from pencil, watercolor, or oil sketches, these land and sky scapes create an image as well as feeling of connectedness to our environment. These are not only about the compositions, but also about color, creation, and the awe of nature.

## Michael Everett

Most of Everett's drawings are done on location, although sometimes he "fine-tunes" in his studio – even less frequently a photo is taken. Providing an opportunity to experience nature during canoe trips and family outings, he makes the most of his time there. Everett's compositions are not always an exact image of his view, and that is not his goal. Using subtle abstraction and even rearrangements of elements to refine his compositions, Michael drafts an ideal landscape that is inspired from reality. Michael's command for crafting a range of values, ever-so-slightly changing subtleties, with nothing more than a No. 2 pencil, is a dying art. All can connect with nature's beauty and with Everett's work to free our mind and spirit, escaping from the insanity of society.

## Scott Hazard

Although his formal training is in landscape architecture, Hazard's primary interests lie in sculpture, environmental art, and installations as a result of reading and interpreting a landscape. Windows, framework, and filters are viewpoints through which we experience the world. Hazard provides these frameworks for the viewer to consider how we perceive and gain insight about the world and that which is in it. By enticing us to pause and really look, he highlights views that are often distilled and numbed through the bombardment of daily stimuli. Additionally, there is an interest in gardens. For Hazard, almost anything can be the creation of a garden – rocks or even weeds growing through a stone wall. Whether you view nature through his framework or your own, what Hazard really hopes is that you will stop and take a look at nature in its natural setting.

## Daniela Banatova

Born in the Czech Republic, now living in Belleview, Florida, Banatova's works appear in European, Australian, and American collections. Although versed in a variety of mediums, her work in the bobbin lace technique is her strength. Inspired by nature, but represented primarily in abstraction, Banatova's organic forms exude primordial essence. The technique itself is likened to a matrix of cells coming together to form a being of life. Her compositions are a balanced harmony of positive and negative space, of texture and color.



**Scott Hazard**  
*Bench for Robert Smithson*, 2003  
Ash wood and stone



**Ronald Affee**  
*Down the River*, 2003  
Oil on Panel



**Daniela Banatova**  
*Motherhood* (detail), 2000  
Bobbin lace



**Michael Everett**  
*Ichetucknee 4*, 2003  
Graphite

# Process

A process can lead to the creation of a form not previously envisioned. Through the exploration of materials, Cristobal Castro, Bill Roberts, and Ed Franklin allow their forms to speak through them. Gene Hotaling and William Schaaf love their materials and process as well, but their work goes beyond with other layers of meaning and social commentary. Likewise, Anthony Ackrill and Sandy Sjolund master their respective techniques through a structured process that clearly demonstrates their skill of realism.

## Ed Franklin

Franklin is about materials and process. Drawn to the ancient Mediterranean method of painting by encaustic – in which colored pigments are mixed with heated wax – Franklin links his spirit and inspiration to past cultures. While Franklin's technique links him to ancient Egypt, his subjects often have Mayan or other new world cultural connections.

Franklin's technique is highly sensitive and process-oriented. Painting with wax is akin to flowing lava that becomes permanent when cooled. The colors ooze and flow, blend and separate. Knowing when to continue and when to stop is key; when there is too much heat or not enough heat in one area, it can play havoc with the composition. These compositions of color are powerful – some suggesting recognizable forms, others not. Franklin's tempting tactile surfaces glow, enticing us to stop and wonder what may lie in the layers beneath. What could possibly be unearthed from these layers of often-reworked canvases, which can be likened to the landscapes that have been reworked by civilizations over the millennia?

## Gene Hotaling

"The art-making process is a ritual activity in which elemental natural materials and processes are used to transform the physical world into objects and images that define a spiritual world. The art object is a very real bridge between the tangible and the transcendent," Hotaling says. Since Hotaling is connected to materials and process, it is understandable that he works with clay. Clay and earth are one, and the ceramic process is a cycle utilizing the elements – earth, water, fire, and air. As creator, Hotaling is one with the process and with nature. These are ritual activities for him, and the functional products he creates become part of a ritual process others enjoy. Nature, creation, and the environment are also evident directly and indirectly in the subject matter of Hotaling's work as well.

## Bill Roberts

Although inspired by aquatic and botanical forms, for Roberts, process is paramount. His process of manipulating metal into plasticity mimics the growth and movement of the natural world with a substance that is anything but fluid. Heated metal or cold forging stretches the material, allowing it to grow organically. The development of a work is evident within itself. The ripples within reveal their process of stretching and expanding – like the rings of a tree or the belly of a mother. The final compositions themselves flow, resembling ribbons in the breeze whirling in and out, and back around again. The skill of any artist is to create something that does not appear to be the sum of its parts. Robert's proficiency as a metal smith reveals organic forms that can hardly be fathomed to materialize from metal.



Ed Franklin  
*Pom in Sky* (detail), 2000  
Encaustic

Gene Hotaling  
*Cerebus*, 2004  
High Fire Ceramics and wood



Bill Roberts  
*Embrace*, 2003  
Forged aluminum and granite

### **William Schaaf**

Process, honoring ancient traditions, and creating sacred spaces have been Schaff's passion for 40 years. Relating to other cultural traditions – Native American and Eastern thought – Schaff crafts his creations. Through the process, "if your intentions are pure, then it lives in the piece," he says. Art is spiritual and meditative, and it also has healing qualities. The earth is clay. If a piece breaks, it can be recycled, creating earth again, and the cyclical process continues. While the process and having the right spirit is paramount, many of Schaff's works are not exactly calm or spiritually quiet. However, the passion seen in his subjects and compositions are cathartic. Commentaries regarding the world and the clash of cultures and spirits are evident and timely. Schaff also reworks his pieces, whether broken or not, as events and experiences act as a catalyst for his artistic evolutions.



**William Schaaf**  
*Violent Encounter, 1980-2002*  
Mixed media

### **Anthony Ackrill**

Ackrill studied and taught at the Florence Academy of Art in Italy, teaching anatomy, figure drawing and painting. His primary interest is the human form; a timeless image utilized for millennia reflects his training. Studying and representing three-dimensional objects and figures on a canvas are often the beginning of an artist's training. Some diverge from this path, while others, like Ackrill, excel at it. While his technical abilities are evident, it is an artist who can develop an image into a composition through color, light and shade, and emotion. The warmth of his tones and colors connect his figures to the earth from which they came and to which they will return. At times Anthony's compositions suggest narratives, but do not necessarily tell a specific story. Rather, he allows the viewer to conceive one.



**Anthony Ackrill**  
*Reaper, 2001*  
Oil on canvas

### **Shirley Sjolund**

Realism, hyperrealism, a sense of virtual reality... Sjolund's technique is steeped in the traditional academic methods. Inspired by a local art teacher, she took a simple hobby and pursued study with Jack Jackson, whose teacher was two steps removed from Jean-Léon Gérôme – the master painter of 19th-century academic art and part of our own Appleton permanent collection. Learning to copy from the masters in that 19th-century academic tradition, Sjolund has quickly accomplished the techniques of classical realism. Her subjects are portraits of contemporary people, often weathered and aged, mature, rather than of the idealized beauty primarily seen among the mythological subjects of the academic tradition. The attention to detail she is able to obtain in her paintings is uncanny. Not interested in portraying just anyone, but only those who are interesting subjects, she brings their stories to life on canvas. Sjolund desires for the viewer to think of the individual lives and experiences she represents.



**Shirley Sjolund**  
*The Cowboy, 2003*  
Oil on canvas

### **Cristobal Castro**

For Columbia-born Castro, it is the process of working with the material that suits his passions. He allows the material to speak for itself, the results being almost secondary. Whether he is casting earth, metal, or another natural substance, it is his manipulation of the material that is required from his work to fit the space in which he exhibits. Castro's installations have included earth cast into serpentine or rectilinear forms that erode over the course of the exhibition, or walls covered with horseshoes he has forged himself and that have been used and retired. The installation (not illustrated) Castro has created for this exhibition is in keeping with his sensibilities. The process of creating the forms and installing them into the space reveals his minimalist tendencies, yet also the zeal of form and process that creates contemplative quiet in the repetition of shapes like the recitation of a mantra.



**John Brett**  
*Pomona General Store,*  
 Pomona, Illinois, 2002  
 Color ink jet print



**Brooke Green**  
*Coco Solo, Panama 1956-1964:*  
*Untitled no. 2 (detail), 2003*  
 Silver print and mixed media



**Angela Gould**  
*1968 with Red, 2003*  
 Oil on canvas

## The Human Condition

*The human condition is a ubiquitous theme among all Biannual artists. Relationships with family, friends, and society as a whole are played out in a creative purging. Memories and nostalgia for “better times” or “older days,” as well as the recollection or recreation of memories, is extremely strong among some of the youngest artists of this group: Brooke Greene, Lisa Iglesias, Angela Gould, and John Brett. Jack Thurstby’s essential human condition scenes and James Vredevoogd’s philosophically surreal paintings are both packed with iconographical elements that cause us to pause and ponder everything from our existence to the world and its current state of being: the good, bad, and the ugly.*

### John Brett

John Brett is a pilgrim on a quest to find answers through his travels. His images act as mile markers, signposts, and postcards, conceptually documenting his search to discover from where we come, who we are, and to where we are going. Escaping for a spiritual fix to allow his artistic freedom to roam, Brett travels the roads of America, documenting the natural and the man-made, which changes daily, evolving not always for the better. Through Brett’s quest he authenticates the heritage of this land, our country. His compositions are a straightforward, literal record. But these colorful scenes do not bore us with their documentation, but rather cause us to smile, reminding us of a fond memory.

### Brooke Green

Combining quirky nostalgia and suburban unease with an interest in human-animal hybrids, Green presents her own sense of iconographic allegory. Green’s works are heavily layered in social commentary. Beginning with family photographs which document her father’s childhood in Panama, she supplements these photos with gerbil images, wallpaper matting, and gaudy frames. These precious family heirlooms are chastised as commemorated frivolity. Through her method she may create history and memories, or the impostors of such, as she comments upon colonialism, consumerism, and artificial Americanism in Panama. Her human-animal hybrids are impostors – one posing as the other. The consumer mindset breeds as quickly as rodents. These rodents, like Americans, are not indigenous to Panama, both introducing ills to that land. Now, however, only the “rodents” remain.

### Angela Gould

Gould, like Green, begins with vintage photographs and the concept of memory. However, Gould notes, “I am interested in our relationship with time... in communicating the malfunctions of memory by describing the way it fades, omits, and rewrites.” For various reasons our minds lose or distort the details of events over time. Gould attempts to capture photo-realistic memories on her canvas, but realizes that to render them faithfully she must manipulate them, describing memory’s imperfection through use of color fields, which abstracts or obstructs, like a “mental blockage.” The concepts of memory and time resonate directly and indirectly throughout Gould’s compositions, causing us to speculate about our own remembrance.

James Vredevoogd  
*The Number 12*, 2001  
 Acrylic on Canvas



Lisa Iglesias  
*Self Portrait in Pink*, 2004  
 Graphite and acrylic on paper



Jack Thursby  
*Tribute to Honor* (triptych detail), 2003  
 Acrylic on canvas

## The Human Condition

### Lisa Iglesias

Iglesias' works are autobiographical and are strongly associated with memory and perceptions. Reared in Queens, NY, diversity was the norm, as was her family of Norwegian and Dominican lineage. There is a disconnect, however, with family, identity and community: a disjunction and loneliness which is abundantly apparent throughout her powerful but minimalistic works. Mixed media creations mimic paradoxical forces in memory and nostalgia, which are expressed through solitude among familial characters and her self-portrait. The collage technique assimilates memories through covering, then sanding, as she exposes the substances beneath, peeking through as memories rise to the surface of consciousness. Lisa's compositional choices of awkwardly floating figures in ambiguous spaces reinforce her sense of loss, loneliness, and detachment. The fundamentals of her work create chasms of psychological and physical distances of the forlorn and nostalgic, of childhood experiences and transitions to adulthood.

### James Vredevoogd

According to Vredevoogd, "The true function for an artist is to synthesize experiences into beautiful compositions, to give apparent order to chaos." The order Vredevoogd provides is necessary to give tangibility to his subject matter; that which discusses time, space, process, physics, and various belief systems. While most of the images – landscapes, still-lives, figures, and portraits – are common, he combines them into surreal compositions that seem almost otherworldly. Some elements reappear from canvas to canvas, symbols that often have multiple meanings. While some iconography is personal, others provide social commentaries. Recently influenced by the likes of Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung, Salman Rushdie, among others, Vredevoogd plays out the complexity of this world and its inhabitants onto his canvases. Ultimately, Vredevoogd superimposes order through intellectually known methods to create strikingly contemplative compositions.

### Jack Thursby

Whether drawing or painting, even studying art amid the heights of the Abstract Expressionism movement, Thursby stayed true to his being: realism. Humanity and the emotions and reactions that result from the influences of the world around us provide a limitless subject for his paintings. Color, brushwork, and the interpretation of humanity compose everyday settings that flow freely amid his controlled style. In his technique of painting, as if a magician taking his paintbrush as a wand, he uses the tricks of illusion through light and shade, deeply colored shadows, texture, color, and form to create the appearance of everyday life. Each complex composition is carefully planned and executed, but they simply communicate an interpretation of human nature.